



Owhaoko B&D land block: Māori land and its significance

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“Mā pango, mā whero, ka oti te mahi - By black, by red the work is complete”

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Glossary

ahu whenua trust	common land trust used administer Māori land
Aotearoa	Land of the long white cloud, New Zealand
hapū	subtribe
iwi	tribe
kaitiaki	trustee, guardian, steward
kaitiakitanga	guardianship, stewardship, sustainability
kanohi ki te kanohi	face to face relationship, to see, hear
kaumātua	an elderly person of status within the family
kaupapa Māori	Māori philosophy
kaitiaki	guardian
kōrero	discussion, conversation
Māori	Indigenous people of Aotearoa
Mahi	work
marae	courtyard in front of a carved meeting house
Pākehā	New Zealanders of European descent
Papakāinga	original home, communal Māori land
rongoā	traditional Māori medicine
taonga tuku iho	treasures handed down, cultural property
te ao Māori	the Māori world view, Māori society
Tiriti o Waitangi	Treaty of Waitangi
Tikanga	cultural values and practices
tīpuna/tūpuna	ancestor
whakapapa	genealogy
whakawhānaungatanga	process of establishing relationships
whānau	family, extended family
whenua	land, placenta



OWHAOKO
B&D LANDS TRUST

1. Executive Summary

Māori land plays a critical part of Aotearoa and its history. Understanding the dynamics of Māori land ownership and the role they play to ensure their whenua is taken care of, is not as straight forward as people assume. Māori landlocked land has influenced a change in the Te Ture Whenua Māori Act to lessen multiple barriers for Māori. This research has been conducted through a kaupapa Māori approach, for Māori by Māori.

This case study is concerned with understanding the Owhaoko B & D land block, its isolated location, the barriers of access and how the trust can initiate a sustainable involvement for the owners. The report is based on semi structured interviews and analysis of secondary data.

Purpose

The aim of this report is to discuss the landlock block Owhaoko B & D with trustees and beneficiary owners. Overall, I am gathering data to build an understanding of what is occurring on this land block, trust developments and what the future aspirations could potentially be.

Key Findings

The key findings of this report are grouped into themes and are a general understanding of the narrative around the story of the land block. They are supported by quotations from interview participants and is raw information that they have voiced.

Recommendations

- Data – Embark on further research of this land block and internships conducted by beneficiaries or owners of this whenua with support from the trust and tertiary institutions.
- Transformation – develop and deliver environmental programmes to help educate whānau about the importance of being kaitiaki for the land.
- Collaboration – form a partnership with a Māori tech and digital business that could showcase the land blocks history and whakapapa digitally, to owners of the land that cannot experience it first-hand.
- Capability development – Provide opportunities for owners to participate in projects associated on the block such as seed banking, wild game monitoring and tree planting.

- Leadership – Māori land court, Te Tumu Paeroa or Te Arawhiti to help support a leadership programme that is delivered partially out of the land block, informing this cohort about the change in legislation and how the land can contribute to this.
- New initiatives – Establish other incentives for owners wanting to visit the block such as high-end accommodation, events, or annual activities.
- Mātauranga Māori – Produce and/or deliver a wānanga based on traditional Māori practices such as rongoā, identifying native trees, te taiao whakawhānaungatanga, kai gathering, tikanga and karakia.

2. Positionality

Kia mau tonu ki te mana me te mauri o te whenua I roto I ngā tikanga o tātou tupuna, tuku iho ki ngā uri.

"The prestige and life force of the land is enhanced beneath the mantle of our ancestral traditions." (Owhaoko B & D Trust, 2022).

Ko wai au?

Ko Suzanne Hepi tōku ingoa

Ko Aorangi te Maunga Tapu

Ko Moawhango raua ko Rangitikei Ngā Awa

Ko Ngāti Whitikaupeka raua Ko Ngāi Te Ohuake Ngā Iwi

Ko Moawhango Te Marae

Nō te rohe o Mokai Patea



Figure 1: Whitikaupeka Whareniui, Moawhango Marae, Moawhango.

My position in this investigation is that I am uri, whānau and a beneficiary of the Owhaoko B & D land block. I am not doing this research on behalf of the Kellogg Rural Leadership Programme at Lincoln University, from the institution lens of the outside looking in. This research is being performed internally for the institution, looking from the inside out. I am conducting this study for my own understanding and engaging with whānau about future aspirations for this whenua. I am creating this document as a fundamental guide that could have potential opportunities for my own family to identify gaps in this research. I hope it can encourage them to pursue more information and gather data for this land locked block.

This research has been a very personal and a meaningful journey for me as I am understanding and learning about my own whakapapa to the Owhaoko B & D Land block. As a young child growing up, I knew about this land but did not realise the whole history of it. Over the past five years I have been on my academic journey and have always used my own whakapapa ties as a research topic in this space. I feel this has given me the opportunity to explore more about my ancestral links. I want to ensure that the knowledge I find out on this identity journey is a steppingstone for my own whānau to participate in this area. I want to guarantee that the research I find and key learnings I compose are passed on for future generations to explore. I want to encourage my whanau, hapu and iwi to never stop learning about our whakapapa and make sure that the next generation can be proficient in this space.

3. Introduction

Māori have strong ties to their whenua. Land is an important taonga for them and it plays a vital role in their everyday living. Māori see themselves as kaitiaki, guardians and protectors of the environment based on Mātauranga Māori (Mead, 2016) with a small quote that supports their ideology of “*If we look after our whenua, our whenua will look after us*”. This philosophy has been carried down from past generations, to ensure that the upkeep of whenua is taken care of for the future of tomorrow's tamariki.

All land in New Zealand was organised as traditional land well before the arrival of colonial immigrants. The Native Land Court's responsibility was to articulate where the boundaries of that land were and convert it from communally held land to then allocating owners and shares (Māori land court b, 2022). Today there is an estimate of 1.5 million hectares or around 6% of Māori Land that remains in Aotearoa. When occupying Māori land ownership, the method to access and maintain rights can be inherited by subsequent of generations through succession (Māori land court, 2022), understanding that this process was not always how Māori land ownership was adopted.

Owhaoko B&D land block is a Māori landlock block located north of the Napier Taihape Road. It forms part of the Mōkai Patea lands which belong to Ngāti Tamakōpiri, Ngāti Whitikaupeka and Ngāti Whiti Tama Iwi and consists of seven land blocks containing a total of 13776 hectares. The Owhaoko B and D trust was established on 27 February 1996 to administer this Māori freehold land blocks which has seven trustees, an executive general manager and is an Ahu Whenua trust (Owhaoko B & D Trust, 2022). The importance of being an Ahu Whenua trust is that it aims to promote the use and administration of the land on behalf of its owners (Māori land court b, 2022).

The aim of this case study report is to understand the landscape of this landlock block and identify what future aspirations the owners and trust have in place to ensure Owhaoko B & D can have a sustainable future. There is emphasis on knowing the whakapapa and history about this native land and the importance of the trust's role.



Figure 2: Owhaoko B & D Land block (Owhaoko B & D Trust, 2022).

4. Aims and objectives

The purpose of this research is to establish a baseline narrative and story about the Owhaoko B & D Land block. The approach of this study is from a trustee and beneficiaries' perspective. For this to be possible I am using the below points as a framework to gather my data and I want this experiment to give other researchers and whānau the opportunity to build onto this case study.

1. The whakapapa of Owhaoko B & D
2. The operations of this land block
3. The role of Owhaoko B & D Trust
4. Future aspirations for the land

5. Methodology

This section discusses the research framework adopted and the importance of whakapapa and whakawhānaungatanga between the researcher and participants. The methodology used for this report was a literature review, a combination of semi structured interviews and use of the Owhaoko B & D Trust website.

5.1 Kaupapa Māori research framework

This research is carried out by a Māori research framework. The predominant framework gives Māori research a distinctive outlook because of the incorporation of kaupapa Māori principles such as whanau, manaakitanga and aroha. It can be understood as Māori having control over the research process alongside the importance of whakapapa and whakawhānaungatanga (Smith, 1999). All Māori people are born with a whakapapa lineage. When understanding what whakapapa is and its relevance to Māori, it is recognised as a concept that provides Māori with identity and history. It connects Māori with a belonging to their land, whenua, and

descendants. These elements help provide Māori a pathway of how they can exercise their own cultural beliefs, values, protocols, and practices. Mātauranga Māori – Māori knowledge, plays a primary role when understanding Te Ao Māori. It is understood that Mātauranga Māori is a resource that helps to understand the Māori worldview and it is what guides business operations for hapū and iwi (Rout et al., 2019). All Māori individuals have a whakapapa, which is a connection to both a hapū and iwi. This is usually the specific land area they are from and where it is inherited from their ancestors. A hapū is a subtribe, while an iwi is a larger tribe which the hapū are a part of (Mead, 2016). It also recognizes that hapū and iwi have the responsibility and obligation to protect their land, ocean and resources through upholding Māori values and customs.

Respecting Māori cultural practices and values is an important element of research with Māori. Exercising Mātauranga Māori is a distinct method that has been hereditary for Māori and is the makeup of the Māori worldview. Articulating more on Māori engagement, whakawhānaungatanga and relationship building is a key element of Kaupapa Māori research by making connections embedded out of whakapapa (Wilson, 2008). There are various aspects of kaupapa Māori research, but the cohesions that exist along with these approaches are: for Māori, by Māori, controlled by Māori, of benefit to Māori, and based on Māori values, customs, and beliefs.

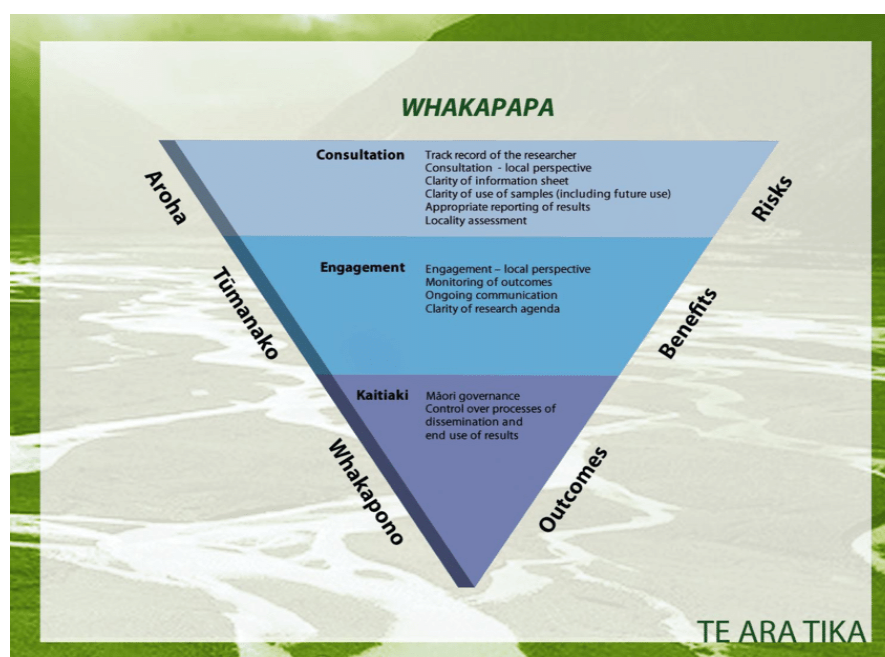


Figure 3: Guidelines for Māori research (Jackson, 2015).

5.2 Literature review

This approach was to conduct a literature review on primary and secondary sources that are available, such as documentation and credible resources. These will be credentials that identify relevant themes and discussions relating to Māori, their land, and Māori land trusts in Aotearoa.

5.3 Semi structured interviews

I have conducted a total of six semi structured and qualitative interviews with a range of Trustees, beneficiaries, and Māori landowners. The feedback from these participants was thematically analysed. The findings from these interviews provided in-depth understanding of what Māori landowners know about their whenua and their future aspirations of this taonga.

Māori methodological principles applied throughout the interviews helped to set a whānau orientated atmosphere and helped this research generate a sense of personal belonging for both interviewer and participants. This was by whakawhānaungatanga and whakapapa knowledge.

5.4 Limitations

The qualitative research limitations were:

- There is lack of or no accessible research information on this specific land block besides the trust's website and Māori land court documentation. Most of this data is either done from a ministries perspective or has been transferred from word of mouth from owners and beneficiaries.
- Accessing interviews with all trustees due to their availability and the timeframe I had to conduct this case study. From this I have had to collect data from more beneficiaries and Māori landowners.
- Since the block is landlocked, I have interreacted more with people that haven't experienced the whenua firsthand.

6. Literature review

The scope of the following literature review is guided by relevant resources relating to Māori and Māori land ownership. There are a variety of resources specifically targeted at Māori and how they are becoming self-sufficient to ensure their resources are looked after by Māori for Māori, (Orange, 2004; Māori land court a, 2022; Te Ara,

2022). More recently there has been a growth of study in this field by Māori academics, hapū, iwi, educational institutions, and ministry bodies.

6.1 The Treaty of Waitangi

Aotearoa's historical past plays a crucial role on how Māori now shape the society of New Zealand. It is important to understand the history precolonial settlement, post treaty signing and where Māori are today.

The Treaty of Waitangi is New Zealand's founding document signed between the British and Māori people of Aotearoa. It consists of an English version, Māori version and an oral version (Orange, 2004). This manuscript was bound by a statement of principles and articles that specifically promised to protect Māori taonga and the Māori people into the future. A treaty was needed for the Māori people of Aotearoa because it concentrated on ensuring to deal with dilemmas created by the lawlessness of British immigrants (Calman, 2012). It was understood that the signing of this document will help to ensure the British crown will protect Māori from foreign forces and strengthen relationships with the Europeans, through trade and other useful assets that would help enhance the value of life for Māori. The document supported and recognised Māori fundamental values and beliefs in Te Ao Māori and guaranteed full rights of ownership for Māori to their lands, forests, and fisheries. It also ensured that Māori had been given the constitutional rights and privileges of the European settlers, giving them the same obligations and citizenship as the British (Buick, 2011). This allowed Māori to stand by the same rules and regulations as the immigrants with a sense of equality between Māori and Pakeha. The oral article enabled Māori to have the freedom to exercise of their own religion and their special cultural traditions that were inherited from past generations (Hill, 2000). Overall, once the document was signed, this was not the case. Māori were not treated as a partner with the government, instead this was the birth of colonisation for Māori. Māori were stripped of their land, deprived of their culture, and punished from speaking Te Reo Māori. The crown had breached what was promised for the indigenous people of Aotearoa and it caused excruciating trauma for Māori (Orange, 2004).



Figure 4: Māori land ownership 1840 to Today

<https://googlemapsmania.blogspot.com/2020/08/stealing-indigenous-peoples-land.html>

6.2 The Treaty of Waitangi today

The British monarchy has now recognised the trauma and terrible engagement they caused with Māori in the past and are now being accountable for their actions (Calman, 2012). An example of this is a government entity they created called The Waitangi Tribunal. This organisation is a standing commission of enquiry that makes recommendations on claims instigated by Māori in relation to legislation, policies, omission, and breach of actions related to what has been stated in the Treaty of Waitangi document (Waitangi Tribunal, 2022).

Once a claim is brought forward by Māori, relating to breaches of the Treaty of Waitangi, they are then required to provide evidence about how the crown has impacted them, their iwi and whānau. This is the begging of the Treaty settlements and the crown relationship journey. The department agency responsible for this is a newly established organisation called Te Arawhiti – Māori Crown Relations (Ministry of Justice, 2022). Their key responsibility is assisting the Crown to be a better Treaty partner with Māori through fostering strong and effective relationships. It recognises the wrong doings in the past and builds onto the aspirations Māori have for the future (Te Arawhiti, 2022).

6.3 Māori land

Māori land has a significant meaning to Māori. It is a part of their heritage, culture, and upbringing. Before British immigrants settled in Aotearoa, Māori had full rights and ownership to this land. Once the Treaty of Waitangi was introduced to the indigenous people of New Zealand, the crown breached their agreement with Māori. Due to this movement, Māori reacted rebellious against the crown which introduced Māori land wars and other inadequate behaviours. Many hectares of Māori land were confiscated in the process, implemented by the government as a justification to eradicate the distressed actions of Māori (Orange, 2004).

Māori land can be defined as being one of two things: Māori customary land which was the land title precolonial settlement and the changing of title from Crown land to Māori customary land and Māori freehold land which is held by individuals that shares together mutual tenants (Ministry of Justice, 2022). There are multiple acts and legislation that support Māori to have autonomy over their own whenua and ownership, as this was a need to ensure breaches from the treaty were held to be responsible. The Māori land court was established as a court of record under the Te Ture Whenua Māori Act 1993. Their role is to provide a court service for owners and shareholders of Māori land, their whānau and iwi. Their main priorities are to assist with occupation, development, and use of the land (Māori Land Court c, 2022).

6.4 Māori Land Trusts

The Māori land court can help to assist with creating a range of compositions to manage Māori land shares and blocks. Shared based trusts are based on sole or multiple owned Māori land which include Whanau, Kaitiaki and Pūtea Trusts. Land based Trusts are Ahu Whenua Trust, Whenua Tōpū Trust, and Māori Reservations. Each category has distinct differences ensuring that the elements can support the need of whānau who own the Māori land. For land-based trusts, the common title of this trust is an Ahu Whenua Trust. This land trust term is designed to support the use and administration of one or more Māori land blocks owned by Māori on behalf of its owners. Overall, the owners are responsible to decide and vote on who the initial trustees are and what their core responsibilities will be under a trust order (Māori Land Court c, 2022). It is an objective that the trustees are to keep landowners, stakeholders, and members of the public aware about what they are doing with the land and what they hope to achieve (Owhaoko B & D Trust, 2022).

Fortunately, there are associations that help to support Māori trustees to carry out and fulfil their statutory duties and functions. Te Tumu Paeroa is an organisation that helps Māori trustees. Because these representatives have a legal responsibility to administer land under a trust order, it is important they comply in accordance with what is stated in the order. The most important element for them is to ensure they regularly keep owners of the trust informed about important matters relating to the land by providing them with information and hosting regular scheduled meetings (Te Tumu Paeroa, 2022).

6.5 Importance of whakapapa

Whakapapa also known as genealogy is a fundamental principle and identity mechanism in Māori culture. It connects Māori to their ancestors, history, and land. The importance of this word is the whole context of relationships, engagement, how everyone relates to each other and the link to locating people within the broader group of kin relations (Smith, 1999). For Māori, the significance of whakapapa does not only mean a human genealogy it is also used as a metaphor for acting as the creation and evolution of all living creations such as the spiritual realm and the environment and its living beings.

6.6 Māori connection to the land

For the indigenous people of Aotearoa, their whakapapa holds the holistic approach of who they are and where they come from. Commonly known in personal terms as their mountains, land, and rivers (Mead, 2016). These taonga tuku iho have been passed down from generations under guardianship. For Māori, their connections are physical, spiritual and an integral component of survival and wellbeing. “Ko au te whenua, ko te whenua ko au – I am the land, and the land is me”, is a Māori saying or whakatauki that explains how significant the land means to them. Ensuring the land is taken care of for the next generation to inherit, is a part of Māori cultural practices.

6.7 Climate Change

There has been a significant contribution towards the degradation of land in Aotearoa (Lyver et al, 2019). This has been identified through various farming activities, commercialisation, and urbanisation (Ministry for Primary Industries, 2022).

This approach has occurred from past individuals, and their hereditary behaviours. Ensuring that there is a sustainable future for the land of New Zealand, the government has had to intervene and produced laws, rearranged, and initiated new viable legislations, on top of generating incentives to guarantee the public is on board. An example of this is the intervention from government about climate change. There is a national adaptation plan, an emissions reductions plan, and a climate action partnership for the agriculture sector (Ministry for the Environment, 2022).

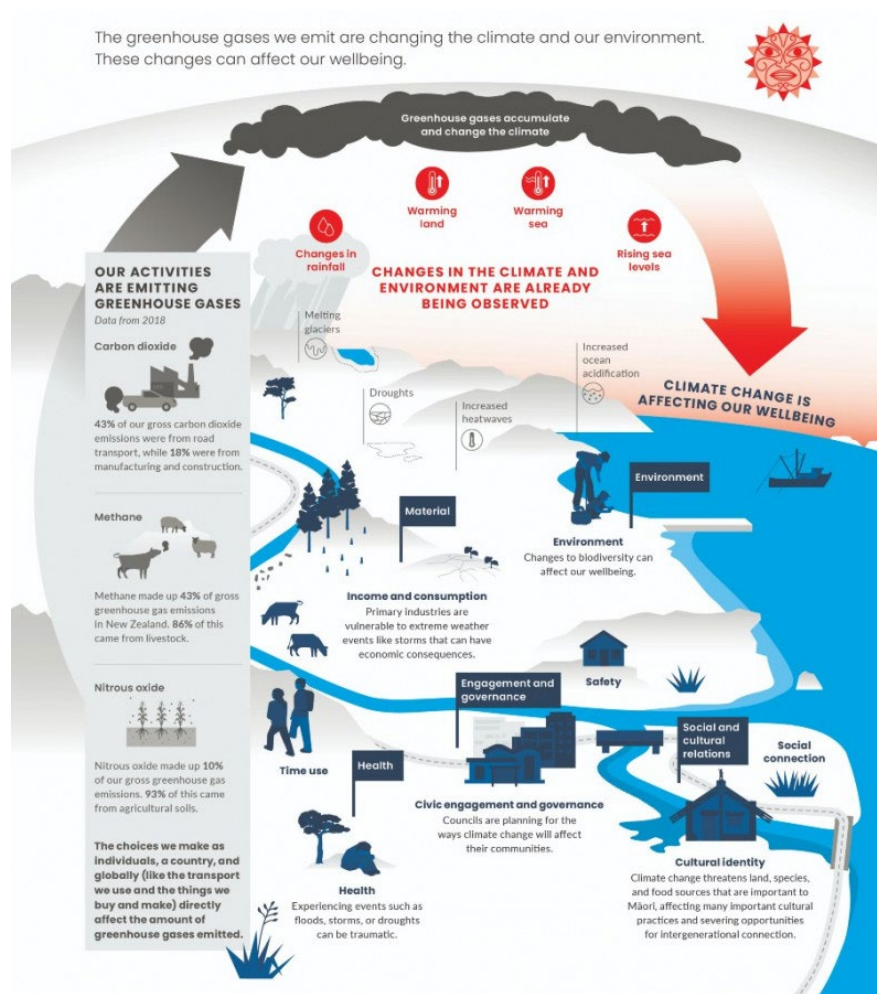


Figure 5: Our changing climate (Ministry for the Environment, 2022).

6.8 Introduced initiatives for a sustainable New Zealand

“Throughout the country, regional councils and city councils have declared climate emergencies. Whānau, hapū, and iwi have been involved in discussions about how climate change is affecting their communities, and more companies than ever have committed to quantifying and understanding their emissions. In 2019, New Zealand

passed the Zero Carbon Act to put emission reduction targets into law and start the transition to a low-carbon economy.” (Ministry of Environment, 2022).

The impacts of natural shocks such as droughts and temperature adjustments have caused an effect on the environment, economy, and wellbeing of people (Ministry of Environment, 2022). Emissions are influencing this shift in climate change, and New Zealanders are now having to change the narrative from past decisions and behaviours. For any landowner, there is a need to now think strategically and have an understanding about how they can positively contribute to the changing climate so that there is a future for the next generations.

7. Case Study: Owhaoko B & Land block

7.1 Whakapapa of this Land Block

The Owhaoko B & D Land blocks were gifted to the crown in 1917 for use by the Māori returned service men. Because this land was not suitable for farming nor settlement, the blocks were later returned to the local iwi of Ngāti Tama, Ngāti Whitikaupeka and Ngāti Whiti Tama in 1972 (Owhaoko B & D Trust, 2022). During 1974, the blocks were administered and under the control of Tuwharetoa Māori Trust Board. Because there was minimal involvement from the actual landowners, several meetings occurred and in 1996 the Owhaoko B & D Trust was established. The Owhaoko B & D Trust administers a total of seven land blocks equalling a total of 13,776 hectares and is located on the boundary of the Napier Taupo Road (Owhaoko B & D Trust, 2022). This land block is an Ahu Whenua Trust, which gives the trustees a single point of contact for the block (Māori Land Court c, 2022).



Figure 6: Owhaoko B & D land block (Owhaoko B & D Trust, 2022)

The Treaty of Waitangi has led to an uneven control over the distribution of land in Aotearoa, where the crown took over the power of Māori land and intervened with control and ownership. As evident in the following quotes:

“The land is around 36,000 acres which is much smaller than what it originally was, it was originally over 100,00 acres but in that particular block that’s what we have retained.”

“I know there was more land within that block, I don’t know exactly how much it was, but I hope one day it comes back to us.”

Beneficiaries of the land block feel passionately obliged to ensure that this whenua is looked after for the future of their tamariki and mokopuna. The land has been inherited from their ancestors and is an important part of their identity. They want to be a representative, leader and assist their whānau to ensure they can be present in on their homeland:

“It is land that has been in our family forever, I have heard it been spoken about growing up and saw different books lying around with the name on it, I know it has always existed...it is a part of me and where I come from.”

“It is homeland, and it is in my whakapapa.”

“My dad was an owner and I have since become an owner me and my siblings.... when the time comes my son will step in and I will step out.”

“For myself, I am slowly starting to become involved with our iwi.... the land is something that belongs to us, and I want it to stay in our family forever.”

7.2 Trust operations and development

On the Owhaoko B & D Trust, they have seven trustee positions that hold different portfolios and are filled by individuals who bring together a variety of expertise and knowledge. They also have elected an executive general manager and administrator who takes care of the administration side. The property holds a mixture of steep scrub, broken country, and native forest with easy rolling tussock. The predominant vegetation is Mānuka bush and mountain beech trees (Owhaoko B & D Trust, 2022). Together they have formulated a set of goals, values, and sense of direction to ensure they are held accountable to the owners of this land. This approach can be interpreted to grantee that the trust deed is the overarching mantle for the operations of this organisation.

Since its establishment, the trust has continued to progress with the practice of recreational hunting and fishing through a land use agreement with Heli-Sika creating an income stream and enabling controlled use of the land. Currently this block of land is landlocked and only accessible by Helicopter. This has caused some obstacles for whānau to experience their whenua first hand:

“The biggest issue we have with our block is that its land locked, and you can only get into it if you fly in with a helicopter. There is no land access to it.”

“Me, my cousins, and uncles have always spoken about wanting to hopefully get out there one day for a bit of a trip. We are trying to jack up a time when we can all get out there together. I know you have to fly in, and I know they do hunting trips and tours. I want to experience that and just to have a look and see what is going on out there.”

“There is a time constraint having to organise travel to the land block. It’s not as easy as jumping in the car and driving down the road. You have to organise and commit. I really do want to get out there and say that I’ve been there. I want to put my feet on my whenua.”

“It is on my list of things to do. I just need to find the time and organise when I can go without it costing too much.”

“I know there are owners hikoi every year but no alternative transport for kaumatua who unable to walk long distance but are wanting to participate in this.”

Over the years, the trust has undergone many changes to help enhance, provide, and increase several activities on the land and from the land trust. An impact of this change has been voiced from beneficiaries, through what they saw would help support the whānau, hapū and iwi. This has also influenced whanau to put their name forward and be a representative as a trustee:

“My issue was about when were they going to give grant to Ngā marae of the trust. I had some background understanding and at the time I asked these two trustees, they virtually said to me put your money where your mouth is and come on the trust and help towards the policy work. I did put my money where my mouth was, and I thought ok instead of standing and moaning from the side you need to get there and try help to push things in a certain direction. I was successful the first year I put my hand up to be a trustee and I’ve been a trustee for eight years.”

7.3 Economic

Economic measures can be identified as the assets owned and income that has been earned. This is including collectively owned trusts, incorporations, and businesses (Smith, 2017). Māori face challenges when development is determined on balancing economic drivers with Māori cultural values and ensuring that there are quality social and environmental outcomes for future generations (Awatere, 2014).

The trust has developed over the years and explored avenues to increase activities and produce revenue on the land block. To facilitate this, they have obtained strong relationships with neighbouring landowners, gained partnerships with organisations and formal agreements with Ministry bodies. These are through:

- Recreational land use agreement with Heli-Sika
- A Nga Whenua Rahui Kawenata with the Minister of Conservation
- Westervelt NZ who operate the neighbouring Poronui Lodge
- A partnership with Oha Honey Limited Partnership

The impact of these relationships has created an income stream, opportunities for activity growth and enhancement, options for beneficiaries to be involved with the block and a piece of sentimental value for landowners to become a part of the journey.

“When I attended my first Owahaoko B & D trust AGM, I registered my attendance then received a tub of manuka honey alongside a T-shirt with the honey brand. I was proud that even though I had not been to the land, I had a piece of it with me. I was able to tell people that this honey was produced on my own whenua. That was exciting to be able to say that.”

“The relationship with Oha honey has given us and our whānau an opportunity to undertake study in bee keeping. I never thought I would be interested in this field of mahi.”

“We are fortunate that our trust has been able to gain a lot of support from Te Puni Kokiri and other organisations where we’ve got consultancy money, to go off and do research and stuff for us and bring it back. “

“It’s a privilege to go hunting on our whenua and to experience its rugged beauty and remoteness. You have to experience it in the flesh to really appreciate and connect with the whenua”

“For our kaumatua, we have decreased the age limit for our whanau to apply for the kaumatua grant. This has helped to lessen the barrier for our elders to apply for this”

Even though there have been positive aspects of creating a thriving community on this land. They are also faced with barriers:

“Because we are landlocked, one of the biggest things to do with it economically is that you had to put too much money into it, to get anything out of it. Virtually if you wanted that, the people would have to spend, before they even got there, they would have to spend \$2000 to get in a helicopter to get to where your venue was.”

“We looked at doing something different besides the hunting, the fishing, and the honey. There had been some discussions about whether we do some glamping. We got these two top guys in the country that were into hunting, hiking, glamping, quite wide range of stuff to do a feasibility study and they gave feedback to our trust and virtually told us that it was not economically viable.”

“Building and developing a venue where people would want to come to, the cost was prohibitive.”

7.4 Environmental

Māori have a strong and powerful spiritual connection to the whenua. They feel that the land is their identity and connection to their whakapapa. It helps to sustain them, so it is important that they protect their land and water from erosion, deforestation, and inappropriate land use. Foremost, it is crucial for Māori to ensure the whenua can be a flourishing environment for future generations. Understanding now that Aotearoa are currently battling a climate crisis, government have intervened and created incentives for landowners to help contribute to mitigating this impact.

Currently the trust has a partnership with the Ministry of Conservation called the Ngā Whenua Rāhui agreement. Their role is:

“To manage the land so as to preserve the natural environment, the landscape amenity, the wildlife habitat, the freshwater habitat, the historical value of the land, and the spiritual and cultural values which tangata whenua associate with the land.”

It is the trusts responsibility to seriously ensure the whenua is looked after. During the year there are various activities that contribute towards sustainability on the block. Even though the land block does not have any stock of their own they contribute to helping the environment in various ways:

“The carbon emission credits associated with the land out there, given the structure of the land it’s a decent chuck with all the native trees.”

“We have good working relationships with a variety of organisations who help with pest control on the block.”

“There are various strategies in place that aim to increase the wellbeing of our native flora and fauna.”

“We have a number of plans; we’ve got a conservation environmental management plan....and so besides all this other thick stuff there’s lots of different little projects that help make it happen.”

“Another big pocket of assets is that our trust has a whole lot of carbon credits, like huge, huge amount. And so, because of the nature of the block, there are a lot of native trees on there, lots of it. Constantly every year an outfit comes out to reassess our carbon credits and assess more of the forest and then that means we get more carbon credits.”

7.5 Future aspirations for Owhaoko B & D

Considering the challenges that the block faces because of its whereabouts and access there is still room for plenty of opportunity and improvement that could help facilitate activities and involvement for the owners. The trust has overarching goals and values to ensure they act as best as they can on behalf of all their beneficiaries. With several ongoing projects that the trust has, utilizing the land resources, feedback from owners and relationships they already have, the growth for this land block into the future is natural. Feedback received from owners include participating in a wider range of things within this space:

“If our owners are truly landlocked and alienated from our whenua, and they don’t fish and don’t hunt what more can we do for our owners of that block?”

“We had an opportunity to just sit there, we never went hiking but we spent the afternoon just sitting there, enjoying just sitting on the land. If we are worried about our owners, we need to do more for them, than take them hunting and fishing

because reality is not everyone hunts and fishes, that's a minority compared to our owners."

"There needs to be an opportunity for owners to just feel the land and say they have experienced what is it like"

"Let's do something where our owners can go out there and just be part of the whenua, that's something that I tend to push and that's something we do for our own."

"It would be awesome to have some sort of accommodation like a hotel or Airbnb for just the landowners of the block. I do like hunting and hiking and am happy to stay at the hut but the rest of my whānau would not want to do that and we are all owners."

"I think it's more so what can we do there, it would be cool if there was a tour that speaks about the history, bird watching, a talk about the native trees. You know when you google things to do in a town, like your top 25 activities, I hope to see Owhaoko B & D tours on there."

These aspirations are for the future of the whenua. These have been administered by trustees, beneficiaries, and landowners of this block with a focus on how they can accommodate owners too and on the land.

8. Conclusion

In conclusion, the summary of this report has been able to confirm common key barriers regarding access to this block. This has already influenced the trust to investigate innovative ways to increase owners accessing the land. The research has exposed potential opportunities that the trust may want to invest in, but also informed what approaches they are currently taking. Even though the data collection involved a small amount of people, it exposed common themes such as the significance of whakapapa, whānau and aspirations for these owners.

Nevertheless, Owhaoko B & D Trust is continually progressing and developing for the best interest of their owners. They have maintained strong relationships with their partnering neighbours and are looking for other opportunities on an economic, environmental, and ecological scale. This is bound together by ensuring that the whenua is and will be sustainable for future generations to experience.

9. Recommendations

- Data – Embark on further research of this land block and internships conducted by beneficiaries or owners of this whenua with support from the trust and tertiary institutions.
- Transformation – develop and deliver environmental programmes to help educate whānau about the importance of being kaitiaki for the land.
- Collaboration – form a partnership with a Māori tech and digital business that could showcase the land blocks history and whakapapa digitally, to owners of the land that cannot experience it first-hand.
- Capability development – Provide opportunities for owners to participate in projects associated on the block such as seed banking, wild game monitoring and tree planting.
- Leadership – Ministry of Primary Industries, Ministry for the Environment, Māori land court, Te Tumu Paeroa or Te Arawhiti to help support a leadership programme delivered partially out of the land block, informing this cohort about the change in land and environment legislations and how land contributes to this.
- New initiatives – Establish other incentives for owners wanting to visit the block such as high-end accommodation, events, or annual activities.
- Mātauranga Māori – Produce and/or deliver a wānanga based on traditional Māori practices such as rongoā, identifying native trees, te taiao whakawhānaungatanga, kai gathering and karakia.

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Appendix 1

Interview Schedule

1. What is the size of the land block and how is it used?
2. What is the description of the climate?
3. Please explain your role associated with Owhaoko B & D Land block?
4. How did you obtain this position?
5. What future aspirations do you have for the development of this landlock block?
6. What are the current economic opportunities on this land?
7. What would you like to see to meet your future aspirations?
8. Pleases explain the impacts of climate change on the landlock block?
9. Negative/positive impacts because of this?
10. Who makes the decisions about various aspects of how the land is used?
11. What is the historical whakapapa behind this landlock block?
12. What do the current owners want to happen to this block/What are their plans?